

Roy Boren

Interviewed by Doris Burton

Transcribed by Joy T. Horton, 16 February 2000

[Transcription begins in the middle of a sentence.]

Vernal Express entitled "Two Bucks Killed and One Squaw Injured." I looked it over to see what they was talking about in the paper. I found out it was a story that I was pretty well acquainted with. I was living over there then, that was in 1906. I remember the date because I was working there [Whiterocks, Utah] and I had printed my name and the date on a granary door with white paint, July 19, 1906, so I know the date was right. They hired me, the Montes boys did. They were putting up hay at the Daniels Ranch at Fort Duchesne, to irrigate for them. I read the story in there and what it was was the story I had saw and knew about when it was, so the date was right. And they had the date as 1904, but that was too early, it was the date of 1906. It was July 4th when I wrote that on the door.

Anyway, the Indians down on Willow Creek, below Ouray down in there, I don't know where that creek is exactly, the Indians got to killing cattle down in there. They wasn't getting enough rations and they would go out and kill white people's cattle, that had them on that range. So they laid in a complaint about those Indians. Now those Indians was renegades from the Meeker Massacre and that's where they put them was down in there. They stuck them in there and the Indians figured they weren't getting enough to eat. So, that's what they were doing to get something to eat, killing these cattle and living off the cattle.

So, the latter part of May, sometime the first of June, they decided to leave the reservation where they was put down there. They left the soldiers to guard them and keep them down there. So, they decided they'd go to Pine Ridge, that's up where the Sioux Indians lives. That's a reservation what they call the Pine Ridge Sioux Indian Reservation. They'd go up there where they could live. There was lots of deer and elk and stuff and they could make a better living there than they could down under the government rule down there. So, they decided to call a meeting and Indians was all decided to go. There was something over three hundred of them that they moved up above Whiterocks on what they call Little Water Flat and [they] camped there and dragged a lot of wood off the hills. I happened to be there. We was building corrals to catch wild horses. That was how I happened to be there and we was camped there, too.

So, they was going to make a big bonfire and make a big pow wow and decide what to do from there.

Doris Burton (DB): Were they all from Meeker?

Roy Boren (Roy): Most of them. They were what they called the White River Utes. They were Ute Indians, but that was their part of the country. They had moved them from Meeker down to Ouray, see, so they took the soldiers from Fort Bridger and put them over there and they was watching them there. These old Indians, they decided they wouldn't be under the government rule, they would leave the reservation and go up there where they could live on the wild meat. So, we pulled out to one side; we had a camp a ways away from them. We went upon the hillside and watched them build big fires, had one big fire, and then they would dance around, war dances, you know.

DB: Did it scare you?

Roy: No, I wasn't scared. I knew most of the Indians at that time. One chief would talk, then another chief would talk, and then they'd dance around this fire, with their feathers and stuff on them, all trimmed up. They decided, by morning, that anybody that associated with the white people, they wouldn't let them go with them, they would send them back. There were a lot of these Indians over here they sent back; they wouldn't let them go.

Anyway, there was over three hundred of them that did go, and they were going to go from there up through a pass and end up at Dry Fork. One Indian was to go in lead, packing a white flag to let white people know that they were peaceful, didn't want to fight or anything like that. Eventually, the Indians would come. Before that, they come from Fort Duchesne and all up through Whiterocks. They cut the telephone line way up through there so that a fella by the name of Captain Hall—he was captain over the Indians—so he couldn't call the soldiers. So if the soldiers did come, there was two men behind with red flags would come up to these Indians that was marching along, wagons and things, and when they got in Dry Fork, why they would ambush. Up on both sides of the canyon is kind of a narrow pass there and they'd wait until the soldier came in there and they'd crossfire and they would kill all the soldiers off and they would go anyway. That was their plans. That's what they decided to do.

So, the next morning, all of them that had been associated with white friends, they sent them back, and then they started out. And then my story starts from there.

DB: Was there women and children?

Roy: Oh, yes. They had squaws in the wagons and on horseback and was driving horses, what they had, ponies and stuff, taking with them to ride. That's what started them out. And that's what this story amounts to start with.

So, they started out for Pine Ridge and went out across Diamond Mountain and up through by Rock Springs and up through the Dakotas to Pine Ridge to the other reservation. But Captain Hall got word to Washington what the Indians were doing. He got word back to let them go, but not give them any rations. Let them go without any rations. They told them they would come back themselves when they starved out. So, these Indians went up there and stayed there until fall. They didn't have any rations and nothing much to eat and no land or anything. In fall, about the first of October, they got starved out, lots of them died, the old people and young.

So, they started out and they go down in Brown's Park and started up Crouse Canyon, come up to Pot Creek there. A kinda heavy snowstorm, about the 10th of October or about that time, I don't know exact dates, [held them] in there for five or six days. They couldn't get out and they didn't have nothing to eat. They sent a messenger out for the soldiers to come from Fort Duchesne and bring them some food to eat and they get back. They left Diamond Mountain, after Crouse Canyon, and pulled over where Steinkaker Reservoir is now. There were only about seventy-five or eighty Indians left. They all had died off, starved to death, the old and the young, and they camped there overnight. One old Indian that I was talking to when he came back, told me he had an old poor horse. I traded horses with him. He said that there was five of them that died that night they camped by the Steinkaker Reservoir. Consequently, these Indians didn't have anything to dig a grave with to bury their dead, so they just threw them in little ditches and wherever they could dig with their hands and buried these Indians just in shallow graves. Now

the reservoir is built there and the waves of the water splashed up and washed these Indians out. That's where the skull and bones come from and how they come there. It was Indians' skulls that night. The next day, there was three and four died between there and Whiterocks. I just wanted to explain.

I don't remember the name of the Indian that told. I wasn't well enough acquainted with the Indians to tell who they were. I just wanted to explain how these shallow graves got there, and where these skulls and stuff that was found there, was buried in these shallow graves. I see it in the paper and it reminded me.

The first time I ever saw my stepmother was when she came in the place. I didn't know anything about her, but my dad told me, "This will be your mother." My dad asked me if I could call her mother, and I said "No, she isn't my mother, but I'll call her by her name and respect her." And I did. Always have. I think they had a party down on Ashley Creek here somewhere on his brother's place. He married a Nash girl, and they had four children. They had a surprise party there and he met her down there. Other than that, I couldn't tell you too much about it. I was about twelve years old at the time. I don't think the other kids resented her too much. I think things went along pretty decent. But the thing of it was this: too much of a mixed up family.

Now, he married her and he'd been through the temple with my mother, and his new wife had never went to church, she had never done anything about it. When she came, then your [Doris Karren Burton's] grandmother on your mother's side and Albert and Emma and Sylvie and Nephi had moved in with us. We had two log houses—cabins. We didn't have much furniture; we slept around on the floor, wherever we could. We didn't have much, very little, and that was a mixed-up mess. And she had Minerva, not quite 2 years old, I think. They stayed that winter for several months.

This Sylvie, she'd pack that Minerva, pack her around on her hip all day long. If one of the kids would happen to touch her foot or her hand or lean against her, she'd squeal and kick like a little kid would, just kid troubles. So, she said, "Sylvie's pinching me," or he's doing something and she would run and tell her mother. And we got to fighting that way. And she would say, "If you don't keep your hands off the kid, I'll slap your heads off, or I'll slap you to sleep." Some remark like that. It got so it caused contention among the family. It never bothered me any. I lived with them for a long time, but it did some of them. Lidg was one of them and the twins, Ed and Ez, were about seven or eight years old and they were great kids for gum. Gum had just come out on the market and they'd get a whole big wad of gum in their mouths, you know, like kids will. They would stick it under the table or under the chair, just like kids will. She would follow them around and see where they would put it and then she'd steal it. She'd run and grab it no matter where they put it; it made the kids mad because they didn't get it very often. Then she would run to Sylvie cause the kids would get after her and take it away from her if they caught her at it. Then Sylvie would run to her mother, her sister, and that caused contention, that was what was the trouble, too many.

Then Nephi got killed. Albert and them stayed there for quite a while. The troubles just kept building up, building up, and they got so they would go to fighting over one thing and another like that. The kids got so they would get a chew of gum, and if they knew she was trying to get it, they would open it up and put cayenne pepper in it, then fold it up and let her see it and then she would get it and put it in her mouth and then your grandmother, she would get madder. She's tear into them, there's the fight there. Then my dad, he would tear into her for paying any attention to it and that's just the way it carried on.

Finally, I had an old uncle, he was a dear old fella too, Ike Allen. He moved away. Some of his people still live up here in Maeser Ward here. I don't think you knew him. He told him, he says, "William, if you raise them family and keep with your wife, you will have to scatter them out. You can't live with them mixed up that way. You will be in trouble all the time, contention. It will get worse and worse." They got to hurting one another's feelings, doing just little things like I'm telling about you. So, Dad, he decided to move to Grand Junction, Colorado. He got away from all of them. We went out and stayed two years and then we came back. We didn't have any of them and Mrs. Snyder, she had got married and died, and the kids had all married off and that's how we got over it. But it still left a little hatred there, you see. That was our troubles. It wasn't 'cause I hated them or anything, 'cause I don't. I like those girls. I like her. I lived with her all my life and I never had a bit of trouble with her.

DB: Was she a quiet person?

Roy: No, not too quiet, not that she was noisy or anything. I might say she wasn't too bright, didn't have no education. She had one eye, a big huge cut in this eyebrow; she couldn't raise that. Something must have happened when she was a kid. I don't know as I ever knew what happened to her eye. Sylvie, she married Roper ?.

I lived there until I was 14 years old. I decided that I was old enough. My dad had enough family to keep as it was. I pulled out and left home and I been on my own ever since. After they separated, they got along good, never had no more trouble. At least I never heard of any trouble they had after they got parted and scattered out. They went to church quite a lot, not too steady, but they went, paid tithing, went to the temple and were sealed together. Some may tell that they didn't, but they did. I and my brother knew when they took the train from Salt Lake and they went down to the Manti temple. Something has got in their heads that they never went to the temple, but they did. I know 'cause I took them there and went and got them and brought them back home.

DB: Can you remember any interesting or sad stories? Weren't you there when they lost Mom in the river?

Roy: No. Well, no, I don't think I had any tragedies. I left home when I was 14. I went over on the Indian reservation, got a job over there and I stayed there two or three years with the Indians, played with them. Ha, ha. So, that's all I can tell about that. Lived with them. I liked the Indians. The Indians are my good friends.

DB: Do you remember any stories that happened while you were living with the Indians?

Roy: Lots of little jokes, I'll tell you. This one old Indian, he went up there where the Indians [were], I was telling you about, building the corral. We'd make a round corral and make the wings away upon the cedars' big high knolls, get the horse up there out of the flies. Maybe a hundred or so would be up there, get in behind and run them off. We would follow them down, then they would get down in there. Once you get them in these wings, we would go down in there, we had some long ropes hung on the gates. We would grab these ropes as we went, and close the gates behind us. That's the way we were catching horses for the Cudahy Packing Company, and they was making soap and I don't know what all. Anyway, they would come out and get four or five hundred head of horses at a time.

This one old feller, by the name of Kumpaneess, old Indian, he had one horse in there, kind of a pinto, spots on him and white face. Oh, he wanted that pony. He could talk American, he'd talk Indian. The government gave us \$5 a head for all unbranded horses to get rid of them. The farmers moving in on the reservations, they couldn't raise a garden or anything 'cause these horses would eat everything up. We got \$5 for all unbranded. The Indians had some with brands on, but we could buy them from the Indians for \$4 or \$5 if we wanted to buy it. This old Indian he wanted this horse, a pretty one, glass-eyed. So, we told him he could have it for \$5. So, he put his saddle on him.

*** I took him and we rode up across a little water flat, north up around, and we got in there behind a great big bunch a standing there in a bunch of quaking asp there. I says, "Now keep up with them now if you can." He couldn't guide him or anything, first time he was ever rode. He said "Gimme the rope." I gave him the rope and he tied it on his saddle and here the horses started running by him, just big bunches of them, going on one side and then on the other. His horse downed his head and started to bucking a little ways, then he quit and started running with the band. Got right out to the edge of hill. Going down the hill, he went down this way and back this way, switchbacks, with them horses whipping down that hill, you know. That old Indian run right out to the edge of the hill and there was a pretty good-sized roan horse, white front feet, oh, he was a pretty one. This old Indian took his rope down and took a loop and threwed it back and he caught him right under one front leg, round his shoulders here. The old horse downed his head and passed him and went on down the hill. When he come to the end of the rope, why the dam cinch broke. There the old horse went down the hill. Down off the hill he went. All he had was the hind cinch.

There was a big wash come down in right to the bottom. He came around the corner. He got down there and he was a rubbing his shin, his hands was just skinned all over. Had a hold of a Monkey Ward saddle; he had bought broke the horn off of it. I just sat there and laughed at him. Sure a comical sight! He went on down to the corral. I followed him down; I was on a gentler horse. I followed him on down and then we shut the gate and then he got his stuff back again. Poor old cuss was just bruised from one end to the other, first the saddle would be on top, then he would be on top. Ha, ha. We used to have a lot of fun down there with those old Indians. They were comical people to live around.

A lot of times I think about them. The white men went over there and they'd get forty acres to fence. Had to have posts one rod apart, good cedar posts and four wires. Then you planted the grain, fixed your ditches and things, then you'd have the crop off it, then they would pay you so much for each one. Two old Indians was a-fencing down in there and I just happened to ride up there. They'd come to a big round willow patch there. One post would come right square in the middle of that. They didn't know what to do, chop all the willow out to get that post in there? So, they thought for quite awhile. So, they took one post down and then they took two posts around and set on the other side. Ha, ha. They got the posts in anyway.

Another time, before I left there, we was a-running horses. We had about between 400 and 500 head of horses and we started out from Whiterocks. Guess you've been to Whiterocks, haven't you? There's a big government pasture there; we had them in there. We decided to go to Price with them. We helped this outfit drive them there. We got so much a day for helping them get them over there, there was six or seven of us. We got just down below Whiterocks and there came a team and a buggy up the road just as hard as they could run. Had an old squaw in there. She had a red shawl in there; she dropped her lines and couldn't get ahold of them, and the team

was a running away. Run right into the front of ‘em, part of ‘em run this way and part of ‘em run that way. Hayden was near there with no fences.

I was a riding a horse that wasn’t too well rode. I could ride him, but he wouldn’t guide very good. I took after this bunch that went west and try to turn them back onto the road, chased them over in there by what now is called Hayden. There was a woman over in there; she had two girls. They was out in the garden and the peas was just in blossom. They was out watering and weeding, had water all along that thing. About 150 head of horses went right straight through that garden. They were sure fixed! Boy, I got told everything that I was. Ha, ha! I tried to explain, but they couldn’t understand. Couldn’t tell them nothing. I sure felt sorry for that old lady.

DB: Do you remember Government Park ? Somebody said the CCC had something to do with it.

Roy: It was called Government Park before the CCC were there. I know there’s a Government Park there. Old Judge Carter had his men work on the road. They moved to Young Springs and camped over in there, oh, for a long time. I don’t know if that’s where it got its name.

Voice: That’s when the government built the road up there.

Roy: Yes, it was real rough. The dam rocks just stood straight up through those old red rocks standing there. That was a rough part of the road.

DB: Who built the road, soldiers?

Roy: Soldiers, government men. I can remember traveling over a lot of the old corduroy.

Voice: I remember when we went up with the sheep when I was a kid, the old corduroy road was still there.

Roy: I think it was built there in 1892, but I’m not sure.

DB: I think part of it is still there.

Roy: Yes, part of it is still there.

Voice: It was boggy and swampy and they put them logs, corduroyed them in there.

Roy: We left Vernal here to go to Victor, Idaho, on the 10th day of May 1897. Them old poles would flip up as you would go over them with a wagon, break through. It was getting rotten then. I took Lonnie and them over there and he said, “How in the hell did they ever get over that to Young Springs?” I said, “Well, they go over it.” There is big rocks there now as high as that table. I don’t think a feller could drive a wagon, he might do, but...

When they built that road there, there was dirt there, but the storms, rains running down through, washed all the dirt out and left the rocks. Then they hauled and shoveled a lot of dirt in there to cover them up. It was pretty good at one time, but that Government Park was the

roughest part of the road. When we went over, we left Vernal of the 10th day of May, we went to Government Park. Old Carl, Old Man Carl, had a sawmill up there in that Government Park, Summit Park, right on top of the Young Springs dugway, there.

tape side 2

Roy: ... and we had fellow with us, Joe Carlisle, who was the old man's son. He wanted to go on up to the mill and see if the roof had caved in there, lotta snow, and straighten things out and we met him up there in that Trout Creek Park, where Trout Creek ranger station is now, and he wanted to go from there on snowshoes. He took his rifle and snowshoes and his lunch with him. They got over there in that Trout Creek ranger station just a little ways and there is a little creek that comes down around a little point. There is a little pine tree about that big around, maybe twelve or fifteen feet long. We got over there the next day and there was Joe Carlisle up in the top of that tree just as high as he could get, his gun and snowshoes down at the bottom. There was an old grizzly bear out there had been walking around the tree all night long. He kept him up that tree, he didn't have no clothes on, liked to froze to death. There he was up in that tree. We got him down out of there and took him on over to the Nielsons. Ha, ha.

It was ten days, if I remember right it was about ten days going from that summit at Government Park over to Young Springs, drive the cattle and horses one day over and they would make kind of trail you know, then at night it would freeze. Then the next morning we would start out early while it was frosted and would carry most of the wagons on top of the snow until we'd catch up with the cattle, then we would have to camp again.

DB Burton: What do you remember about Vernal?

Roy: Oh, yes, I can remember. That's where I went to school, in Vernal. When I was four years old, we moved to Vernal and lived in an old dugout hole one winter right there where Allen Jones died there, right down under the hill from the house. We dug a dugout there, put in some slabs and stuff and lived in that all winter. When I was five years old, I went to school. A lady by the name of Maizie Hall was my first school teacher. She was old Josh Hall's daughter.

DB: Where was the schoolhouse?

Roy: Right there where the old church house is in Maeser. I walked to school barefooted all one winter that first year. The first conference they had in the spring in April, this Maizie Hall, she had me learn this song to sing in conference. I sung my song barefooted. Ha, ha. You wouldn't believe that now, pretty close to that, but not yet.

I was four years old when we came from Cannon out there. I don't remember too much about the town of Vernal.

DB: What can you remember about the mill?

Roy: I used to put my hands in them belts and get them pinched every time I put my hand in there. I remember that, them belts used to go up there and go back down

DB: I am interested in the mill, because this kid up to the library is going to paint a picture of it, we are trying to find out all we can about it.

Roy: Oh, I used to go there. I went there until it quit running; it didn't run very long. After we moved here, it shut down. That old flume they had rotted out. I used to have to have a letter Ike Jones wrote, his daughter probably has it, about his life when he worked in the mill. I don't know whether Esther's got it or whether Lonnie's got it. They see things like that and first thing you know, why it's gone. But Jones worked in that mill.

I went down to the Manti temple down there on an excursion. I met his daughter down there, his next to the youngest I think, her name was Elizabeth. She was a-cooking it the Manti temple. She walked over to me and said, "You look like one of the Joneses." I said, "Do I?" "Yes," she said, "You any relation to them?" I said yes and I told her who I was. She said, "That's what I thought. Well, I got a history of just before he died. He went down and worked in the temple after he sold his place, the rest of his life. I will give it to you." She give it to me and I kept it in a book for a long time. I let Esther read it and I believe Lonnie took it from there. I don't know where it went from there. I'll see if I can locate it. I'll get it and let you read it. He had an awful life, I'll tell you.

DB: Well, you remember about the mill then?

Roy: Old Man Reynolds helped build it, partly made it, I don't know. Old Man Reynolds, his name was Bill, I'm not sure. I had to go in there ever once in a while for a sack of flour. I always had to stick my hand in under them belts.

Unknown: I remember we took a grist up there one time, couldn't hardly get decent flour down at this mill, you know. We took the grist up there and it was better flour than here.

Roy: It was good flour. Sometimes it was kinda sticky, poor wheat or something.

Unknown: Well, you know, they used that soft wheat.

Roy: People thrived on it anyway, sticked to their ribs.

DB: I remember this old mill down here, you know, the old Vernal mill, right down here. When I was a kid, I can remember that. I used to like to go in there, because that man was always white from the flour. A Peterson had it when I knew it. We used to think there were ghosts because they were white.

Roy: The old electric mill right over here, it burnt down. Yeah, there was one.

Unknown: Old Man Pack had it for a long time before Peterson; Jimmy Duke was the miller. I don't think he ever did get all the dough out of his eyebrows.

One time, my Dad and I was a-coming from Hamm's Fork, was moving to the reservation. We was coming from up there a-driving a bunch of cattle and horses. We camped on Sheep Creek and the horses kept a-running away. We couldn't keep around. We had a bell on one and they started. We could hear them a-going. My dad said we had better get up and go get

'em or they'll get so far ahead of us, we can't catch up to them. We got up and took after them and back the road away. I was standing right aside the road just before we got to the horses and there was a big old bear raised up and showed his teeth at us. My dad, he stooped over and picked up a handful of gravel and throwed it in the old bear's face. He put his paws down and went loping off. That's what was scaring the horses. I don't remember the date when it was, sometime a long in the first of June as near as I can remember, but I don't remember the date.

My mother died when I was ten years old, little over ten. I was ten in March and she died in October. The next year my brother-in-law wanted me to go out with the sheep with him. He was on Taylor Mountain and it was too lonesome up there. He wanted me to come up and help him herd sheep on the head of Trout Creek, Windy Park. We had about 4,000 head of sheep. I went up there and stayed with him. Walt MacKay lived in Vernal here. I was asked to stay with him until school started and he would buy my school clothes. So, I stayed with him and along in the summer, Davies, his oldest first baby, took sick and died, and some fellers came after him and he went down and left me there with the sheep for about a week, alone, before he came back.

I found a place there on Ashley Creek, Taylor Mountain, next to Ashley where there was a little hollow there thick with arrowheads on both sides. I sacked up a little salt sack with arrowheads of all different colors, looked as though there had been a war there sometime with the Indians at some earlier date. I showed it to some Indians and told them about this and they said that one time the Shoshone Indians and the Crows and Blackfoot Indians claimed this north side slope of the Uinta Mountains as their hunting grounds. They used to come in here and hunt and run the Utes out. Finally, the Utes got up some spunk and they figured that this was their range down here and the others' was farther north, and they had a great war in there somewhere and the Utes whipped the Shoshone and them off and they lived there peacefully since that time.

That was an old tale the Indians told me. That could have been the time and place of that great war, I don't know.

End